



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 14 February 2011	Item 3
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AONB PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY UPDATE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01588 674088 Fax 01588 674099

Summary

This paper provides members with a summary update of recent activity of the AONB Partnership staff team and an outline work programme for the coming Financial Year.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the information provided and offer comments.

KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS SINCE OCTOBER 2010

Take and co-ordinate action to conserve and enhance natural beauty, to promote wellbeing, enjoyment and understanding and to further sustainable development.

- Good progress with allocation of LEADER grants, project monitoring and claims.
- Development of Walking with Offa cross-border LEADER co-operation project.
- Study visit hosted for Loir Valley LEADER Local Action Group focusing on local food.
- Monitoring of Sustainable Development Fund projects and processing of claims.
- Advisory visits and Management Plans completed for Woodlands project (ongoing).
- SITA funding bid for Rivers Project submitted. Significant input to national strategic work on freshwater pearl mussel.
- Contract let for development work on an Upper Clun Community Catchment project.
- Shuttles service for 2011 prepared.
- Discover Local events under way.
- Walking with Offa delivery under way - walks leader weekends, Harvey map, events, etc.
- Walking for Wellbeing project under way – workshop held on Walking Action Plan.
- E bulletin issued.
- Business Link and Rural Enterprise Grant advice sessions held at AONB Partnership office.
- Organising 2011 events and preparation of Events Programme and Visitor Guide.
- New AONB website in preparation, to go live imminently.
- Ludlow & Shropshire Hills tourist brochure published, with strong AONB content.
- Big Lottery grant approval received for Farming Project – recruitment in progress.
- Reaching final stages of Stage 1 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund for Stiperstones – Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (deadline 28 Feb).
- Long Mynd – Stiperstones public meeting, attracting over 40 people.

Develop policy and strategy for the area through the AONB Management Plan, and influence the policies and strategies of others.

- Management Plan Actions update published.
- Agricultural Buildings Design Guide published.
- Defra funding settlement and strong Ministerial support received.
- Contract let for Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Extension agreed to cover whole of Shropshire Hills & Ludlow Destination Development Partnership area.
- Links with Marches Local Enterprise Partnership through Sustainability sub-group.

Develop the AONB Partnership as an inclusive and effective organisation.

- Progress with considerations of fee-earning and charitable structures. Attendance at 2 NAAONB training seminars. Meeting arranged for March with a view to forming a Friends committee.

Support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB (also a cross-cutting theme in some items above).

- School farm visits held.
- Friends social event held at Blakemoorgate, Stiperstones.

List of Background Papers

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Team Work Programme 2011 -12 Overview

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Key areas of work	Key actions and targets
Take and co-ordinate action to conserve and enhance natural beauty, to promote wellbeing, enjoyment and understanding and to further sustainable development.	
LEADER in the Shropshire Hills	Award grants in line with Local Development Strategy and Business Plan. Support projects with delivery, grant admin, collaboration and publicity.
Sustainable Development Fund	Give grants and support projects to fully allocate fund.
Rivers Project	Complete Catchment Management Plan for the River Clun catchment. 20 farm advice visits, seek to support 6 capital projects. Progress with establishment of Community Catchment Project for the Upper Clun.
Woodlands Project	Advise owners of 30 woodland sites. Complete 20 Management Plans and bring 15 sites into active management. Support 2 business opportunities. Facilitate Woodland Forum.
Farming Project	Employ Farming Officer and Farming Community Officer, meetings with 50 farmers, 3 farmer events, 2 workshops, 7 farm energy survey referrals, work with 5 schools, 6 farm tours and 4 presentations to community groups.
'Buy Local'	Implement 11 events for Discover Local Project. Maintain membership at least 80 businesses in Sustainable Business Scheme. Maintain and promote www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk/ directory.
Shropshire Hills Shuttles	Manage 2011 Shropshire Hills Shuttles bus service, and plan for 2012.
Walking with Offa	Develop 5 new circular walks, and long distance path, provide training and familiarisation for 30 businesses, engage with 50 businesses to encourage better benefits from walking, plus others outputs met.
Walking for Wellbeing	Action Plan for the Shropshire Hills complete and delivery of initial actions, area steering group formed, green events guide and car free walks guide developed, 3 events training sessions
Promotion	12 talks to partner organisations, education or community groups. Publish 15 press releases, 4 E-bulletins, 2010-11 Annual Review. Publish joint Shropshire Hills Events programme/ visitor guide for 2011.
Support projects led by others	Support at least 12 conservation/ economic projects. Support at least 3 promotion/ interpretation projects.
Project development	
Stiperstones – Corndon	Proceed with HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme development, subject to outcome of stage 1 bid.
Develop policy and strategy for the area through the AONB Management Plan, and influence the policies and strategies of others.	
Management Plan	Produce annual Update of Management Plan Actions with progress.
Planning	Complete approval of Planning Protocol and comment on relevant LDF documents and planning applications. Provide training session on the AONB for planning committee members.
Other strategies	Provide input to at least 4 consultations.
Local authorities and Partnerships	Establish/maintain links with relevant departments of each local authority. Input to Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.
Guidance & strategy	Complete Sustainable Tourism Strategy and work with Destination Development Partnership on implementation.
Develop the AONB Partnership as an inclusive and effective organisation.	
AONB Partnership and sub-groups	Hold 20 meetings of 10 groups in the AONB Partnership structure. Provide training/ briefing session for Partnership members.
AONB Team	Hold monthly team meetings and at least one team training day.
Business Planning	Develop proposals for increasing charitable and fee-earning income.
Wider networks	Raise involvement with National Association for AONBs.
Support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB (also a cross-cutting theme in some items above).	
Support for groups	Develop 'Friends of the Shropshire Hills' group, and maintain 100+ members. Support 3 parish planning groups – with plans or actions arising. Support 30 community groups in total (includes SDF, LEADER, etc above).
Schools	4 schools involved with AONB related activity
Volunteering	Involve 300 volunteers through AONB-led and supported activities.